



I. Oceanus

Sometimes I stand upon the shore
Where ocean vaults their effluence pour,
And troubled waters sigh and shriek
Of secrets that they dare not speak.
From nameless valleys far below,
And hills and plains no man may know,
The mystic swells and sullen surges
Hint like accursed thaumaturges
A thousand horrors, big with awe,
That forgotten ages saw.
O salt, salt winds, that bleakly sweep
Across the barren heaving deep;
O wild, wan waves, that call to mind
The chaos Earth hath left behind;
Of you I ask one thing alone—
Leave, leave your ancient lore unknown!

II. Clouds

Of late I climb'd a lonely height
And watch'd the moon-streak'd clouds in flight,
Whose forms fantastic reel'd and whirl'd
Like genii of a spectral world.
Thin cirri veil'd the silv'ry dome
And waver'd like the ocean foam,
While shapes of darker, heavier kind
Scudded before a daemon wind.
Methought the churning vapours took
Now and anon a fearsome look,
As if amidst the fog and blur
March'd figures known and sinister.
From west to east the things advanc'd—
A mocking train that leap'd and danc'd
Like Bacchanals with joined hands
In endless file thro' airy lands.
Aerial mutt'rings, dimly heard,

The comfort of my spirit stirr'd
With hideous thoughts, that bade me screen
My sight from the portentous scene.
"Yon fleeing mists," the murmurs said,
"Are ghosts of hopes, deny'd and dead."

III. Mother Earth

One night I wander'd down the bank
Of a deep valley, hush'd and dank,
Whose stagnant air possess'd a taint
And chill that made me sick and faint.
The frequent trees on ev'ry hand
Loom'd like a ghastly goblin band,
And branches 'gainst the narrowing sky
Took shapes I fear'd—I knew not why.
Deeper I plung'd, and seem'd to grope
For some lost thing as joy or hope,
Yet found, for all my searchings there,
Naught save the phantoms of despair.
The walls contracted as I went
Still farther in my mad descent,
Till soon, of moon and stars bereft,
I crouch'd within a rocky cleft
So deep and ancient that the stone
Breath'd things primordial and unknown.
My hands, exploring, strove to trace
The features of the valley's face,
When midst the gloom they seem'd to find
An outline frightful to my mind.
Not any shape my straining eyes,
Could they have seen, might recognize;
For what I touch'd bespoke a day
Too old for man's fugacious sway.
The clinging lichens moist and hoary
Forbade me read the antique story;
But hidden water, trickling low,
Whisper'd the tales I should not know.

“Mortal, ephemeral and bold,
In mercy keep what I have told,
Yet think sometimes of what hath been,
And sights these crumbling rocks have seen;
Of sentience old ere thy weak brook
Appear’d in lesser magnitude,
And living things that yet survive,
Tho’ not to human ken alive.
I AM THE VOICE OF MOTHER EARTH,
FROM WHENCE ALL HORRORS HAVE THEIR BIRTH.”

[image]

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